

AN ACT
For suppressing
The Detestable SINS
OF
Incest, Adultery and Fornication.



Die Veneris, Decimo Maii, 1650.

Ordere*d by the Parliament, That this Act be forthwith Printed and Published.*

Hen: Scobell, Cleric. Parliamenti.

*London, Printed by John Field, Printer to the Parliament of
ENGLAND. 1650.*

AMERICA

In Supply of

The Decade 2172

OF



By the Author

Printed by J. B. [illegible]

For the [illegible]

1801

AN ACT

For suppressing

The Detestable SINS

OF

Incest, Adultery and Fornication.

WHEREAS the suppressing of the abominable and crying Sins of Incest Adultery and Fornication, wherewith this Land is much defiled, and Almighty God highly displeased; Be it Enacted by the Authority of this present Parliament, That if any person or persons whatsoever, shall from and after the four and twentieth day of June, in the year of our Lord, One thousand six hundred and fifty, carry, or have the carnal knowledge of the Body of his or her Grandfather or Grandmother, Father or Mother, Brother or Sister, Son or Daughter, or Grandchild, Fathers Brother or Sister, Mothers Brother or Sister, Fathers wife, Mothers husband, Sons wife, Daughters husband, Wives Mother or Daughter, Husbands Father or Son; all and every such offences are hereby adjudged and declared Incest: And every such offence shall be, and it is hereby adjudged Felony; and every person offending therein, and consenting the same,

shall be

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or being therefore convicted by verdict upon
 Indictment or Presentment before any Judge
 or Justices at the Assize or Sessions of the
 Peace, shall suffer death as in case of Felony,
 without Benefit of Clergy: And all and every
 such Marriage and Marriages are hereby de-
 clared and adjudged to be void in Law, to all
 intents and purposes; and the children begot-
 ten between such persons, notwithstanding
 any contract or solemnization of Marriage, to
 be illegitimate, and altogether disabled to claim
 or inherit any Lands or Inheritance whatso-
 ever, by way of descent from, or to receive or
 challenge any child's portion in any Goods or
 Chattels of their said parents, or any other An-
 cestors of such Parents. And be it further En-
 acted by the Authority aforesaid, That in case
 any married Woman shall from and after the
 four and twentieth day of June aforesaid, be
 carnally known by any man (other then her
 husband (except in case of Raviſhment) and of
 such offence or offences shall be convicted as a-
 fforesaid by confession or otherwise, every such
 Offence and Offences shall be, and is hereby
 adjudged Felony; and every person, as well the
 man as the Woman offending therein, and con-
 fessing the same, or being thereof convicted by
 verdict upon Indictment or Presentment as
 aforesaid, shall suffer death as in case of Felony,
 without benefit of Clergy. Provided, That this
 shall not extend to any man who at the time of
 such Offence committed, is not knowing that
 such Woman with whom such Offence is com-
 mitted is then married. Provided also, That
 the said penalty in case of Adultery aforesaid,
 shall not extend to any Woman whose husband
 shall be continually residing beyond the seas
 by

by the space of three years, or shall by common fame be reputed to be dead; nor to any woman whose husband shall absent himself from his said wife by the space of three years together, in any parts or places whatsoever, so as the said wife shall not know her said husband to be living within that time. And be it further Enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if any man shall from and after the four and twentieth day of June aforesaid, have the carnal knowledge of the body of any Virgin unmarried woman or widow, every such man so offending, and confessing the same, or being thereof convicted by verdict upon Indictment or Presentment, as also every such woman so offending, and confessing the same, or being thereof convicted as aforesaid, shall for every such offence be committed to the common Goal, without Bail or Mainprize, there to continue for the space of three Months; and until he and she respectively shall give security, to be taken by one or more Justice or Justices of the Peace before whom such confession or conviction shall be had, to be of the good behavior for the space of one whole year then next ensuing. And be it further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That all and every person or persons who shall from and after the four and twentieth day of June aforesaid, be convicted as aforesaid, by confession or otherwise, for being a common Bawd, be it man or woman, or wittingly keeping a common Brothel or Bawdy house, shall for his or her first offence be openly whipped and set in the Pillory, and there marked with a hot Iron in the Forehead with the Letter B. and afterwards committed to prison or the House of Correction, there to work for his or her living for the

the space of three years, without Bail or Main-
prize, and until he or she shall put in sufficient
Sureties for his or her good Behavior, during
his or her life: And if any person by confession
or otherwise shall be convicted of committing,
after such conviction, any of the said last rec-
ited offences, every such second offence shall be,
and is hereby adjudged Felony; and the person
and persons so offending shall suffer death, as
in case of Felony without benefit of Clergy.
And be it further Enacted by the Authority
aforesaid, That the Justices of Assize in their
respective Circuits, and the Justices of Peace
in every County, at their usual and General
Sessions, are hereby authorized and required
to give in charge to the Grand Jury, to en-
quire of all and every the Crimes aforesaid:
And the said Justices of Assize, Justices of the
Peace in their General Sessions, and all and
every Mayor and Justices of Peace of any
City, Borough or Town Corporate, that have
power to hear and determine Felonies at their
usual Sessions, shall have full power and au-
thority to enquire by verdict of twelve or more
good and lawful men within the said respective
counties and places aforesaid, of all and every
the crimes and Offences aforesaid; and upon
Indictment or presentment, to hear and deter-
mine the same, as in other cases of Felony
or Trespas, Any Law, Usage or Custom to
the contrary notwithstanding. Provided, That
no Attainder for any Offence made Felony by
this Act, shall make or work any corruption of
Blood, loss of Dowry, Forfeiture of Goods,
disinheritance of heir or heirs. Provided also,
That no person or persons shall incur any of
the penalties in this Act mentioned, unless the
said

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said person or persons be therefore indicted within twelve Months after the Offence committed, Provided also, That it shall be lawful for any person or persons who shall be indicted for any the Offences aforesaid, to produce at their respective Tryals any witness or witnesses for the clearing of themselves from the said Offences whereof they shall be so Indicted: And the Justices before whom such Tryal shall be so had, shall have power, and are hereby authorized to examine the said witnesses upon Oath. Provided, That no parties confession shall be taken as Evidence within this Act against any other, but onely against such party so confessing; nor the husband shall be taken as a witness against his wife, nor the wife against her husband, for any offence punishable by this Act.

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